Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) In a service-oriented architecture in which a client issues a service request to a service provider and receives a response to said service request from said service provider, said client and said service provider constituting entities at first and second ends of a communication path, a method of processing said requests and responses comprising the steps of:

accumulating a plurality of such requests or responses at one end of said communication path for transmission to the entity at the other end of said communication path;

generating a single message in accordance with a message protocol permitting attachments to a message, the generated message containing the accumulated plurality of requests or responses as attachments to the message; and

transmitting the generated message containing the accumulated plurality of requests or responses to the entity at the other end of said communication path.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 in which the generated message is a SOAP message containing the accumulated plurality of requests or responses as SOAP attachments.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 in which said message is transmitted from said first end of said communication path and contains requests, said method further comprising the steps of:

receiving a message from said second end of said communication path containing a plurality of responses to service requests generated by said service provider; and

extracting individual responses from the received message for processing at said first end of said communication path.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 in which said message is transmitted from said first end of said communication path and contains requests, said method further comprising the steps of:

receiving said message at said second end of said communication path; and

extracting individual requests from the received message for processing at said second end of said communication path.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 in which said message contains workflow information specifying an order of execution of the requests, said method further comprising the step of:

executing the requests in the order specified by said workflow information.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 in which said workflow information specifies whether requests in said message are executed sequentially or in parallel, said requests being executed sequentially or in parallel as specified by said workflow information.

7. (Currently amended) In a service-oriented architecture in which a client issues a service request to a service provider and receives a response to said service request from said service provider, said client and said service provider constituting entities at first and second ends of a communication path, a method of processing said requests and responses comprising the steps of:

receiving at one end of said communication path a message from the other end of said communication path generated in accordance with a message protocol permitting attachments to a message, the received message containing a plurality of such requests or responses as attachments to the message; and

extracting individual requests or responses from the received message for processing at said one end of said communication path.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which said message is received at said second end of said communication path and contains requests together with workflow information specifying an order of execution of the requests, said method further comprising the step of:

executing the requests in the order specified by said workflow information.

9. (Currently amended) In a service-oriented architecture in which a client issues a service request to a service provider and receives a response to said service request from said service provider, said client and said service provider constituting entities at first and second ends of a communication path, apparatus for processing said requests and responses comprising:

means for accumulating a plurality of such requests or responses at one end of said communication path for transmission to the entity at the other end of said communication path;

means for generating a single message in accordance with a message protocol permitting attachments to a message, the generated message containing the accumulated plurality of requests or responses as attachments to the message; and

means for transmitting the generated message containing the accumulated plurality of requests or responses to the entity at the other end of said communication path.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 in which said message is transmitted from said first end of said communication path and contains requests, said apparatus further comprising:

means for receiving a message from said second end of said communication path containing a plurality of responses to service requests generated by said service provider; and

means for extracting individual responses from the received message for processing at said first end of said communication path.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 in which said message is transmitted from said first end of said communication path and contains requests, said apparatus further comprising:

means for receiving said message at said second end of said communication path; and

means for extracting individual requests from the received message for processing at said second end of said communication path.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 in which said message contains workflow information specifying an order of execution of the requests, said apparatus further comprising:

means for executing the requests in the order specified by said workflow information.

13. (Currently amended) In a service-oriented architecture in which a client issues a service request to a service provider and receives a response to said service request from said service provider, said client and said service provider constituting entities at first and second ends of a communication path, apparatus for processing said requests and responses comprising:

means for receiving at one end of said communication path a message from the other end of said communication path generated in accordance with a message protocol permitting attachments to a message, the received message containing a plurality of such requests or responses as attachments to the message; and

means for extracting individual requests or responses from the received message for processing at said one end of said communication path.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13 in which said message is received at said second end of said communication path and contains requests together with workflow information specifying an order of execution of the requests, said method further comprising the step of:

executing the requests in the order specified by said workflow information.

15. (Currently amended) A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for processing requests and responses in a service-oriented architecture in which a client issues a service request to a service provider and receives a response to said service request from said service provider, said client and said service provider constituting entities at first and second ends of a communication path, said method steps comprising:

accumulating a plurality of such requests or responses at one end of said communication path for transmission to the entity at the other end of said communication path;

generating a single message in accordance with a message protocol permitting attachments to a message, the generated message containing the accumulated plurality of requests or responses as attachments to the message; and

transmitting the generated message containing the accumulated plurality of requests or responses to the entity at the other end of said communication path.

16. (Original) The program storage device of claim 15 in which said message is transmitted from said first end of said communication path and contains requests, said method steps further comprising:

receiving a message from said second end of said communication path containing a plurality of responses to service requests generated by said service provider; and

extracting individual responses from the received message for processing at said first end of said communication path.

17. (Original) The program storage device of claim 16 in which said message is transmitted from said first end of said communication path and contains requests, said method further comprising the steps of:

receiving said message at said second end of said communication path; and

extracting individual requests from the received message for processing at said second end of said communication path.

18. (Original) The program storage device of claim 17 in which said message contains workflow information specifying an order of execution of the requests, said method further comprising the step of:

executing the requests in the order specified by said workflow information.

19. (Currently amended) A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for processing requests and responses in a service-oriented architecture in which a client issues a service request to a service provider and receives a response to said service request from said service provider, said client and said service provider constituting entities at first and second ends of a communication path, said method steps comprising:

receiving at one end of said communication path a message from the other end of said communication path generated in accordance with a message protocol permitting attachments to a message, the received message containing a plurality of such requests or responses as attachments to the message; and

extracting individual requests or responses from the received message for processing at said one end of said communication path.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19 in which said message is received at said second end of said communication path and contains requests together with workflow information specifying an order of execution of the requests, said method further comprising the step of:

executing the requests in the order specified by said workflow information.

21. (New) The method of claim 1 in which the generated message comprises a header and a body containing information about the attachments.

22. (New) The method of claim 1 in which the attachments are MIME attachments.